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40 graves vandalized in Westfield cemetery

County police suspect youngsters imitating Satanic cult worship

By GABRIEL H. GLUCK

Nearly 40 graves in a Westfield cemetery were desecrated and one was partially excavated over the weekend, Westfield police said yesterday.

The superintendent of the cemetery, Richard Ralph, said some of the graves had the word "hatred" and some symbols, including crosses, spray-painted on them.

Authorities refused to comment on reports that signs of Satan worship were left in Fairview Cemetery, a nonsectarian cemetery in the northeast corner of the Union County community. Police said there were no signs of anti-Semitic or other racist markings, but would not disclose further details.

The followers of Satanism hold beliefs opposite to those espoused by Judeo-Christian religions. While a concept such as love would be held sacred by organized religions, its opposite, hatred, would be revered by such a cult. Many times, the same symbols are used, such as crosses, but they are turned upside down or otherwise perverted.

Union County Police Chief Richard Mannix, who has had to deal with numerous incidents involving Satan worship on county parklands over the years, said county investigators have usually found that when vandalism is present, those involved have been teenagers and not true cult members.

"If we find graffiti or vandalism, we find it was young kids," he said.

Union County police have investigated approximately three to four incidents of devil worship during the past few years. Seven or eight years ago, county police were encountering 12 to 15 incidents a year, he said.

While evidence of such rituals is usually found in the Watchung Reservation, there have been isolated cases at Warinanco and Rahway River parks and the Oak Ridge Golf Course.

"Investigators will find ritualistic settings with bones, crossed candles, bowls of wine, and twigs in diagrams. With the true Satanists, we find dead animals. But there is no evidence of vandalism."

Westfield Police Chief James F. Moran said that last Sunday, police found approximately 40 headstones overturned and others spray-painted.

There was also some attempted digging at one grave, he said, but declined to indicate how deep the vandals got. Ralph also declined to comment on the extent of the digging. However, Moran said the coffin was not opened.

The vandalism took place in the northern section of the cemetery sometime between Saturday night and Sunday morning, he said, noting that the cemetery is open all night.

Ralph said the cemetery is left open to allow police patrols to cruise through the area and that closing it would be counterproductive.

Maintenance crews were working this week to right the overturned headstones and erase the spray paint.

"We're in the process of returning everything to its pre-vandalistic state," Ralph said, noting that the cemetery assumes responsibility for the incident and will make all the necessary repairs.

While the cemetery has experienced "random incidents in the past, this was the largest number at one time," Ralph said. "There was no rhyme or reason. They just knocked down straight rows."

Ralph said he had no idea why that particular 10-year-old section of the cemetery was hit.

While several relatives of the deceased have seen the damage, cemetery officials would like to put everything back together without disturbing the other relatives, Ralph said.

Morris rules out sheriff patrols for tiny borough

Victory Gardens may be forced to reactivate police operations

By KEN ROBINSON

Victory Gardens' request for weekend patrols by the Morris County Sheriff's Department was rejected yesterday by the freeholders, who said they were not persuaded the tiny municipality had fully explored other police protection possibilities.

Victory Gardens Mayor Thomas Carroll could not be reached for comment yesterday, but an angry borough Council President John Palovitz said he was "steamed" by the freeholders' decision.

"My reaction is, what did the freeholders ever do for Victory Gardens?" Palovitz said. "They sit up there like God in a part-time job, but when it comes to getting any action, forget it," he said. Earlier this year, he noted, county officials turned down Victory Gardens' application for a $50,000 community development grant to buy a fire truck.

Reviving the tiny borough's police force is "the only thing we can do," said Palovitz, adding he would favor soliciting local opinion on the matter through a referendum.

"We felt the situation didn't warrant any help from the sheriff at this point," said Freeholder Director Patric Hyland. He noted, however, that Sheriff John Fox requires no freeholder authorization to provide "emergency services in a crimee situation" to Victory Gardens or any other Morris County town.

Carroll, whose borough's police department was scrapped in 1979 in the face of financial problems, had sought the county's help following residents' complaints this summer about rowdy youths.

Fox, who last week endorsed Carroll's request, offered to provide a K9 unit officer for one eight-hour shift on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until the weekend after Labor Day. He estimated the cost of providing the service at between $1,500 and $2,000.

Palovitz said a greater police presence is needed to deter youths who have been "creating a general nuisance," especially by driving motorcycles at high speeds and throwing beer bottles and other litter onto private property.

Hyland and freeholders Alfonse Scerbo, Walter Luger and Frederick Knox Jr. said it may be possible for the municipality of 1,043 to forge a police coverage agreement with neighboring Randolph or Dover. However, officials from those two towns, as well as adjacent Rockaway Township, have said they are not interested in contracting police coverage.

"I'd be happy to sit down with Dover and Randolph to try to work something out," said Hyland. "It's kind of difficult to believe one town can't help out another for a few weeks. But on the other hand, I think Victory Gardens should look to a permanent solution to their problem."

The freeholders also suggested the borough consider other options, such as hiring private guards, forming a civilian patrol, seeking state funding to resurrect the local department and pressing for more frequent coverage by the State Police, who are responsible for providing patrols for Victory Gardens.

"This is not an area the county should get involved in. They chose not to have a police department. They can't just turn around to the county and say they need help," Scerbo said.

"The state has a program where they will supply money for additional police protection," Luger said. "There seemed to be no real effort on the part of the municipality to help itself."

"If they were to renew their request on the basis they looked at every avenue, I think we'd look at it again," said Knox.

Luger and Scerbo strongly objected to approving sheriff's patrols, arguing it could lead to similar pleas from other financially troubled towns.

"The final solution to Victory Gardens' problem is to work out some kind of inter-governmental solution with Dover or Randolph . . . Whatever assistance we were talking about rendering was only a temporary Band-Aid," Fox said.

Caldwell votes cop, fire bonds

A $60,000 bond ordinance for a new police and fire department communications system and a $40,000 bond ordinance to overhaul an old fire engine were adopted last night by the Caldwell Council.

New radios, base station, transmitter and multi-channel recording system will be installed. The current police and fire communications system dates to 1963.

Police Chief Harry Johnson said that the current problem of communicating with patrol cars at the west end of town (Bloomfield, Lane and Ravine avenues) will be alleviated with the new system. The upgrading of the communications system will begin in November.

A 1962 fire engine, one of two used by the department, will be overhauled. First Assistant Fire Chief Richard Messer said that Caldwell will work out an agreement with a neighboring town to provide assistance when necessary during the time the fire engine is out of commission.

The work includes a change from a gas to diesel engine, from manual to automatic transmission and from hydraulic to air brakes. The council noted that a new fire engine would cost about $100,000.

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